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PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ  
RUEHNEH RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHRS RUEHVK RUEHYG

DE RUEHAH #0155/01 0301401

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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2234

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 4770

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2562

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2427

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3016

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0944

RHMFUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000155

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

SCA/CEN; EEB

PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN

ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON

COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [UN](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: UN PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY CENTER

FINDING ITS NICHE IN PROMOTING REGIONAL COOPERATION

REF: 08 ASHGABAT 1229

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Although it has experienced its share of growing pains, the Ashgabat-based UN Preventive Diplomacy Center is playing an increasing role in promoting regional cooperation on a variety of issues shared by all the Central Asian states. Its director has made huge strides in getting the Center's programs off the ground, and they appear to be finding resonance with regional leaders. Afghanistan has also become a focal point for some of the Center's programs. A series of conferences and seminars will put the region's challenges into clearer perspective and advance the cause of greater regional cooperation. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) On January 27, the Charge called on the UN Preventive Diplomacy Center's director, Ambassador Miroslav Jenca, to learn more about the Center's ongoing efforts to advance regional cooperation. The Center is currently focused on organizing projects and programs to address some of the most significant problems that face the Central Asian states, including narco-trafficking, religious extremism, terrorism, arms proliferation, spillover from Afghanistan, and competition for water resources. Amb. Jenca also noted that energy security is becoming an element of the Center's work.

CENTER'S MANDATE INCLUDES COOPERATION WITH AFGHANISTAN

3. (SBU) Jenca said that issues relating to Afghanistan have occupied much of the Center's time. His staff is working on a broad program focused on Afghanistan and the role that Central Asian states can play to promote stability there. Regional neighbors have much they can potentially contribute to this goal, including construction, energy partnerships, and infrastructure development. Jenca noted that the Russian Government has proposed a foreign ministers'

conference in Moscow on promoting stability in Afghanistan. Even Uzbekistan, which in the past has been reluctant to discuss Afghanistan, may participate. Jenca said that even though such conferences focus largely on Central Asia and Afghanistan, it is critical to include other regional players, particularly Iran and Pakistan, in order to get the full range of perspectives.

#### UZBEK-TAJIK DISPUTES POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS

¶4. (SBU) Jenca plans to travel to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan soon to discuss intergovernmental water agreements. He expressed certainty that the ongoing impasse between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regarding the transit of Turkmen electricity to Tajikistan was closely connected to festering disputes between the two countries on water. He opined that the dispute had the potential to become "dangerous for the region." Jenca said that during Russian President Medvedev's recent visit to Uzbekistan, President Karimov had asked Medvedev to be "more assertive" in encouraging the Tajiks and Kyrgyz to be more cooperative on water issues. The Ambassador suggested that perhaps some aspects of the October 2008 Bishkek water agreement were not being implemented. Turkmen President Berdimuhamedov's upcoming official visit to Tashkent, Jenca said, might also include talks on water issues.

¶5. (SBU) The Center has a seminar planned for March 11-12, to which will be invited regional experts on regional cooperation with Afghanistan. The Preventive Diplomacy Center is also organizing a larger regional conference, the

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theme of which will be "Global Challenges for Central Asia Now and in the Next 15 Years." The conference will include in-depth sessions on regional threats, Afghanistan, the global economic crisis, energy, pipeline security, and water. The Center would like to invite the well-established academics who work in think tanks that are subordinate to the presidents in each of the Central Asian countries, he said. Turkmenistan, however, has no such entity, and the Center has had difficulty identifying Turkmen participants.

¶6. (SBU) The Center has also been working to facilitate a pipeline security conference that the Turkmen government will sponsor on April 23-24. The conference will be based on the principles laid out in the Turkmen-originated UN Resolution on ensuring the reliable and stable transit of energy. Turkmen officials want high-level participation in the conference and are hoping that agreements can be signed as a result of it, Jenca said. As an aside, Jenca commented that when the Turkmen proposal was discussed in the UN General Assembly in 2008, it centered on "pipeline security." He claimed that when Russian and other country representatives objected to the term in early drafts, the phrase "...Reliable and Stable Transit of Energy and its Role in Sustainable Development..." became the new wording.

#### LIMITED BUDGET CONSTRAINS CENTER'S EFFORTS

¶7. (SBU) Turning to the Center's own operations, Jenca noted that one of his biggest challenges is the Center's very small budget. While the Center has sufficient funds to run the office and hold modest seminars, the staff has to regularly petition UN headquarters for additional funds to do anything more ambitious. Jenca noted that one of his ambitions was to improve the Center's capacity to do regional political analysis. He had recently proposed establishing a local staff representative in each of the other four Central Asian countries, to get a better sense of developments, but UNDP representatives had not been supportive of the idea because of its perceived political nature. Jenca said he is now planning a trip to Tehran in order to open up a dialogue with the Iranians. He said he has found it useful to maintain close contact with the governments of Turkey, Azerbaijan, the United States, and the European Union, and

Iran should be part of that equation as well.

¶18. (SBU) When the conversation turned to the issue of extremism, Jenca said that during a recent meeting, Deputy Chairman for Foreign Affairs Meredov refused to talk with him about the September 2008 events in Khitrovka (ref). Jenca was skeptical of the Turkmenistan government's claim that the shootout was the result of an attempted drug bust. He noted the lack of information that would point to a drug connection. He also found it interesting that when President Berdimuhamedov convened the last session of the Peoples' Council in late September 2008, religious leaders, including some from Afghanistan, had been invited to attend.

¶19. (SBU) COMMENT: Jenca's description of the expanding work and operational growing pains of the Center show that it is increasingly finding its niche serving the interests of development and cooperation in the region. The Center's growing reputation as an effective institution that will advance the cause of regional cooperation, and Central Asian leaders' interest in working with it, indicates that it could become a key partner in promoting regional initiatives. END

NOTE.

MILES